

What is claimed is:

1. A method for determining whether an agent is capable of inhibiting the fusion of a macrophage-tropic primary isolate of HIV-1 to a CD4⁺ cell which comprises:
 - (a) contacting (i) an appropriate CD4⁺ cell, which is labeled with a first dye, with (ii) a cell expressing the HIV-1 envelope glycoprotein of the macrophage-tropic primary isolate of HIV-1 on its surface, which is labeled with a second dye, in the presence of an excess of the agent under conditions permitting the fusion of the CD4⁺ cell to the cell expressing the HIV-1 envelope glycoprotein on its surface in the absence of the agent, the first and second dyes being selected so as to allow resonance energy transfer between the dyes;
 - (b) exposing the product of step (a) to conditions which would result in resonance energy transfer if fusion has occurred; and
 - (c) determining whether there is a reduction of resonance energy transfer, when compared with the resonance energy transfer in the absence of the agent, a decrease in transfer indicating that the agent is capable of inhibiting fusion of HIV-1 to CD4⁺ cells.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the CD4⁺ cell is a PM1 cell, a primary human T lymphocyte, or a primary human macrophage.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the HIV-1 envelope glycoprotein⁺ cell is an HIV-1_{JR-FL} gp120/gp41 HeLa cell.

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4. The method of claim 1 wherein the agent is not previously known.
5. An agent determined to be capable of inhibiting the fusion of a macrophage-tropic primary isolate of HIV-1 to a CD4⁺ cell using the method of claim 1.
6. A therapeutic agent capable of inhibiting the fusion of an HIV-1 envelope glycoprotein⁺ cell with an appropriate CD4⁺ cell using the method of claim 1.

add (B)